

SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION
JUNE 12, 2003
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Commissioners in Attendance: John Owen, Chair; Angali Bhagat, George Blomberg, Jeanne Krikawa, Lynn Krizanich, Joe Quintana, Steve Sheehy, Mimi Sheridan, Tony To.

Commissioners Absent: Angela Brooks, Gregory Davis, Matthew Kitchen, Denise Lathrop, Paul Tomita.

Staff: Marty Curry, Executive Director; Cheryl Sizov, Acting Director; Barbara Wilson, Commission Analyst.

Guests: Chuck Kirchner, SDOT; Ethan Melone, SDOT; Lesley Bain, consultant; John Rahaim, CityDesign/DCLU; Martha Lester, City Council; Newell Aldrich, City Council.

Call to Order

Chair John Owen called the meeting to order at 3:04 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Krizanich made a motion to approve the May 22, 2003 Minutes, Commissioner Sheridan seconded and the Commission unanimously approved the minutes as written.

Chair's Report

Chair John Owen extended a big welcome back to Commission Director Marty Curry who had been on sabbatical for the past 2 months. He also extended immense thank you to Cheryl Sizov for stepping in as the Commissions acting director during Ms. Curry's absence. He presented her with a card and gift from the Commissions as a small token of appreciation. Ms. Sizov said she was honored to fill in and very much enjoyed working the Commission. She also noted that it was a pleasure to experience first hand the incredible wealth of information and expertise that the Planning Commission possesses.

Chair Owen made the following schedule reminders;

- Thursday, June 19th, 9:00-10:30 am; Seattle Design Commission reviews Northgate library, community center, and park. Key Tower 2750. For those who want to see some forward motion on Northgate!
- Thursday, June 26th, 6:00-9:00 pm and Saturday, June 28th, 8:00 am-2:00 pm; Waterfront Planning Forum. Chair Owen encouraged Commissioners to participate and asked them to fill in the sign-up sheet, indicating whether/which sessions they will attend.

Marty Curry stated that there is a request for Commissioners to meet with Armenian senior planning officials August 11 – 15 as part of a study tour. Commissioners Krizanich, Blomberg and Owen agreed to participate.

Chair John Owen asked for input on Commission involvement for the DCLU Planning Director hiring process. Commissioner Mimi Sheridan suggested that the Commission should play a role by inviting the final candidates to attend a commission meeting to have an informal discussion with Commissioners. Chair Owen suggested that a Planning Commissioner sit on the selection panel. Ms. Curry stated that she would take both ideas back to DCLU Director Diane Sugimura for approval.

Commission Business:

NOMINATING COMMITTEE:

Nominating Committee Chair Lyn Krizanich presented the Commissioners with a slate of officers for 2003 Commission Executive Committee. The slate presented is as follows: John Owen, Chair; George Blomberg, Vice Chair; Jeanne Krikawa, At-Large member; Matthew Kitchen, Chair of the Transportation Committee; Lyn Krizanich, Chair of the Housing, Neighborhoods and Urban Center Committee. Commissioner Sheehy made a motion to approve slate and adopt the new officers. Commissioner Tony To seconded the motion.

ACTION: Vote on 2003 slate of officers. Approved by unanimous consent.

COMMISSIONER SPOTLIGHT: JEANNE KRIKAWA

Commissioner Krikawa shared that she is the third of ten children in her family with brothers and sisters scattered throughout the country. By age 13 she had already lived in six states. Jeanne's all time favorite job ever was when she was a waitress through high school and college in West Hartford, Connecticut. Jeanne attended Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York where she received her degree in architecture. Her first job out of school was working for a non-profit that assisted low income people in getting loans for home improvement efforts. She then went to work for an architecture firm where she worked on some amazing projects such as the restoration of an historic hotel and designing a ski jump at the Olympic training facility in Lake Placid, New York. She moved to Seattle and went to work for Environmental Works where she participated on two incredible projects; creating an affordable energy efficient model conservation home; and; working for Youth Care, a program which serves runaway teens where she was involved in a project to build a shelter and transitional housing. She was a consultant for Arai/Jackson and got involved in some light rail efforts and then went to work for Sound Transit. She first became involved with the Planning Commission when she was on the pedestrian advisory board. Now she does consulting when she can fit it into her very busy schedule of coaching track, teaching people

to run marathons and gardening. She personally has run 2 marathons and about a dozen ½ marathons.

COMMISSION PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSION

COMMISSION BRIEFING ON ACTIVITIES DURING MARTY CURRY'S ABSENCE

Cheryl Sizov lead the Commission in a briefing and brainstorming session to outline lessons learned during Marty's absence. Ms. Sizov noted that the Commission analysis of the Mayor's Northgate proposal and the response to Council President Steinbrueck's request for review were the major activities of the Commission's work during this time.

Commissioner Krikawa noted that she thought the City staff was helpful getting timely and relevant information to the Commission. Staff Barbara Wilson suggested that a key lesson was that a formal request for Commission review of a project/issue enabled the Commission to know how to focus its review (where it could add to the debate) and to act with authority. She also noted that preparing written questions for staff was a useful tool in getting the information it needed. These allowed the Commission to take a strong position.

Cheryl Sizov observed that there is a need to have a way to create a body of work and a record of decisions that ensures continuity over time. She noted that this exists for the Commission's previous work on Northgate and was immensely helpful.

Commissioner Steve Sheehy stated that when the Planning Commission was asked to engage in the review he was hesitant, skeptical and questioned the motivations. He was also concerned about coming into what felt like a done deal. Now he believes that the Commission's decision to respond was an opportunity, and it also illuminated some weaknesses. The Commission had to let some other important activities and issues slip in order to deal with a quick response.

Chair John Owen stated that he thought it was appropriate for the Commission to do exactly these kinds of things. A lesson he hoped others learned was that it would be better to bring the Commission in earlier and to provide clear information to us. Commissioner Joe Quintana stated that he thought the Commission played a useful role, had important information to add and thus created value by responding so clearly.

Ms. Sizov agreed with Steve Sheehy that the price the Commission paid was that other important priorities slipped. Commissioner Blomberg stated that he thought the Northgate issue was ripe and because of the Commission's long experience with the issues there it was an appropriate role and that building in the ability to respond to these 'hot' issues should be standard operating practice.

Commissioner Quintana stated that he felt that the action taken helped people to visualize the value of the Planning Commission. Commissioner To felt very positive about the action taken on Northgate and said it really clarified in his mind why he is on the Commission. He felt the decision was responsible, defensible and well presented. He added that the Commission should be more proactive about PR and press and to use the Commission website to promote its work.

Ms. Sizov concluded by suggesting that the Commission would benefit from taking specific actions when having briefings and building that more clearly into the agenda. This would help to build that body of documentation that was so useful in the Northgate issue. Others agreed with this assessment.

MONORAIL PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION

DEIS Review Schedule:

Chuck Kirchner, Seattle Department of Transportation

Chuck Kirchner stated that he is in charge of preparing and compiling the documentation for the City's comments on SMP DEIS, particularly focusing where decisions that will be made by the City. He noted that the City uses SEPA authority in making its decisions and SEPA will provide guidance to the SMP. The City has responsibility for several decisions, including, issuance of the Master Use Permits (MUP) and permitting the guideway in the street right-of-way. The Interlocal agreement between the City and the SMP is an interactive process and will define responsibilities and relationships between the two agencies in this project. He stated that while a joint NEPA/SEPA analysis is being conducted, the NEPA analysis is under the purview of the new Homeland Security agency now that the Coast Guard is under the authority of that agency.

Chair John Owen asked him to update the Commission on the review schedule for the DEIS, and on ways the Commission can work with the City to focus on issues of mutual concern. He also asked Chuck Kirchner what he foresees as key issues. Mr. Kirchner stated that the DEIS is due out August 29, 2003. The City's response to for the DEIS, with a public hearing scheduled for September 29, 2003. He noted that the Planning Commission can play a role by sharing issues and areas of concern with the City that come out of the station area planning process and from their DEIS review. He stated that the City will focus on transportation, visual analysis and historic and cultural impacts. Martha Lester added that the comments will focus on visual representation and visual impacts, not just protected views. She noted that the City Council has encouraged the City to really delve into an analysis of the visual presentation and that visual representations be available before the release of the DEIS.

Chair John Owen thanked Chuck Kirchner for his update and stated that the Commission looks forward to seeing more information from the City as the DEIS review progresses.

Station Area Planning:

Ethan Melone, SDOT, Lesley Bain, SDOT consultant, John Rahaim, City Design.

Chair John Owen welcomed City staff and asked them to proceed with their presentation on station area planning for the Monorail. Ethan Melone stated that the City is taking a team approach on integrating the Monorail and that he sees the Planning Commission as the lead advisory body on Station Area Planning. He also stated that the lead staff oversight on station area planning within the City is the Monorail Implementation team on Urban Design and Planning. Marty Curry noted that the Planning Commission staff participates on this interdepartmental team.

Ethan Melone then presented a power point presentation that outlined Green Line project in more detail and some of the station area opportunities and issues. First he outlined some of the design principles that are helping to shape the program noting the Planning and Design Commission had been integral in helping to shape these overarching principles. He also outlined the four elements of the City's Station Area Planning effort – a Background Report, an Urban Design Assessment; Public Involvement; and Station Area Action Plans. He also noted that per request of Council member Licata they will begin to keep a detailed public involvement log. He stated that the City's community involvement so far has consisted of mainly joint meetings with the Monorail Project.

Commissioner Jeanne Krikawa asked for a more detailed description of the content of the Station Area Action Plans. Mr. Melone stated that the plans would include recommendations for public and private sector actions, would illustrate urban design concept plans and would make recommendations on code amendments.

Commissioner Blomberg noted that at recent public meetings there was a lot of discussion on access issues and asked if the City would incorporate access recommendations in the station area action plans. Ethan Melone responded that the EIS will help inform these decisions and it will be difficult to have enough information to make these recommendations without an urban design assessment. He also stated that the Urban Design assessments focus on station areas and not on the monorail itself. He noted that the Monorail Review Panel (MRP) will focus on the monorail design, making recommendations at all key stages in the development of the project.

Commissioner Jeanne Krikawa noted that outlining opportunities and options and making recommendations without knowing what the resources are for completing any projects at station area will be confusing to the community and sets up expectations that it appears that no one is responsible for meeting. Lesley Bain responded that the EIS should provide some guidance about mitigation and that right now the process is more about identifying opportunities or needs versus assigning responsibility. Commissioner Krikawa warned that

the City needs to be very careful about setting up false expectations with the community and that the Monorail Project and the City should get more clarity about potential partners and funding sources for improvements around station areas.

Martha Lester noted that there is a Council resolution that states the monorail may have to make some commitments outside of the project to provide connectivity. Ethan Melone added that in the Implementation Plan a key consideration is feasibility and funding capacity overall. In some instances the City may have to push the envelope on transit issues with Metro and seek other fund sources.

Cheryl Sizov asked how the EIS mitigation and the Station Area Action Plan relate and how the timing lines up. Ethan Melone stated that the draft EIS is scheduled for release on August 29, 2003 and that station area planning will be underway by that time. Commissioner Steve Sheehy noted that SEPA will inform decision makers, but it does not require them to carry out mitigation measure identified in the EIS. Lesley Bain stated that they are breaking things into two main categories; those which are City serving projects and those that are City shaping. Throughout the station areas there are combinations of both. Commissioner George Blomberg stated that he likes the notion of engaging adjacent property owners in beneficial outcomes and wonders how that tactic is related to station area planning. Ms. Bain admitted she was not sure where the line is.

In a discussion about specific station areas many specific question were posed. Commissioner Krizanich specifically brought up the issues at Dravus – how parking issues will be managed and how very poor pedestrian access will be addressed. Lesley Bain brought up the fact that the West Dravus street station is not covered by a neighborhood plan and that there were major challenges with the bridges (size, scale and fit) which are also not covered in any plan. Clearly station area planning has to be about much more than just station design. Ethan Melone stated that the EIS will help the City answer parking questions, ridership issues and whether tools like RPZ's need to be used. Ms. Bain also noted that the City has been pretty clear that Park and Ride lots are not appropriate in an urban environment. This is an example where station area planning must think through the place making and access questions. This is true for Ballard, West Seattle as well as Dravus.

Commissioner Lyn Krizanich asked how the City interacts with SMP and how City policy and regulations will be used in fostering joint development in these place making areas. She stated this should not just be a SMP decision, especially since they keep saying they are not responsible for station area planning improvements. John Rahaim observed that there are questions of timing in joint development projects that were very difficult in light rail planning. He also stated that the Monorail should enable development and at a minimum not preclude future opportunities.

Commissioner George Blomberg stated that the City should apply some of the lessons learned from Light Rail planning and not be fearful about passing legislation that places a moratorium on auto oriented uses until the Station Area Plan have been put into place because we should not allow these uses to vest in the station areas.

Marty Curry suggested that the Commission clearly define and describe its role in the Station Area Planning process, particularly thinking through its process for advising and participating in outreach. Chair John Owen stated that the Commission would have a more in depth discussion on station area planning and submit a memo that clearly outlines the role of the Commission in Station Area Planning. He thanked City staff for the presentation and the materials and said the Commission would offer more detail on the Commission role in the next few weeks.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURN

Commission Chair John Owen adjourned the meeting at 5:30 p.m.